

THE AKGEL OP PEACE

her. " Dearest and beloved son in Christ sweet Jesus," she wrote, " I, Catherine, servant and slave of the servants of Jesus Christ, write to thee in His precious blood, with desire of finding thee again, my little lost sheep, and I have a very great desire of putting thee back into the fold with thy companions. It seems to me that the devil has so robbed me of thee that thou dost not let thyself be found; and I, thy miserable mother, go seeking and sending for thee, because I would fain take thee upon my shoulders, by reason of the bitter sorrow and compassion that I have for thy soul. Open the eye of thy understanding, dearest son, raise it from the darkness, and recognize thy fault, not with confusion of mind, but with knowledge of thyself and with hope in the goodness of God. See how miserably thou hast spent the substance of grace that thy heavenly Father gave thee. But, even as that son did, who, when he had wasted his substance and began to be in want, realized his fault and had recourse to his father for forgiveness, so do thou ; for thou art impoverished and in want; thy soul is dying of hunger. Go to thy Father for forgiveness ; He will succour thee, and will not despise thy desire, if it is founded in sorrow for the sin committed—nay, He will fulfil it sweetly. Alas, alas ! where are thy sweet desires ? O my unhappy soul I I have found that the devil has stolen thy soul and thy holy desire. The world and its servants have spread the, snares with its disordinate pleasures and delights. Up, now, take the remedy, and sleep no more. Comfort my soul, and be not so cruel, for thy salvation, as to grudge me one visit. Do not let thyself be deceived by the devil through fear or shame. Break this entanglement. Come, come, dearest son : I can well call thee *dear*, so much art thou costing me in tears and labour, and in much bitter sorrow. Ah, come, my sweet son, and return to thy fold. I plead my excuse before God, for I can do no more. In coming and staying, I am asking nothing from thee, save that thou wouldst do the will of God. I say no more. May Christ Jesus console thee with thyself and me with thee."¹

¹ I follow the Palatine MS. 59, which gives a better text of this letter than